

Life is Beautiful. Always: Using virtual reality to share the experience of disability

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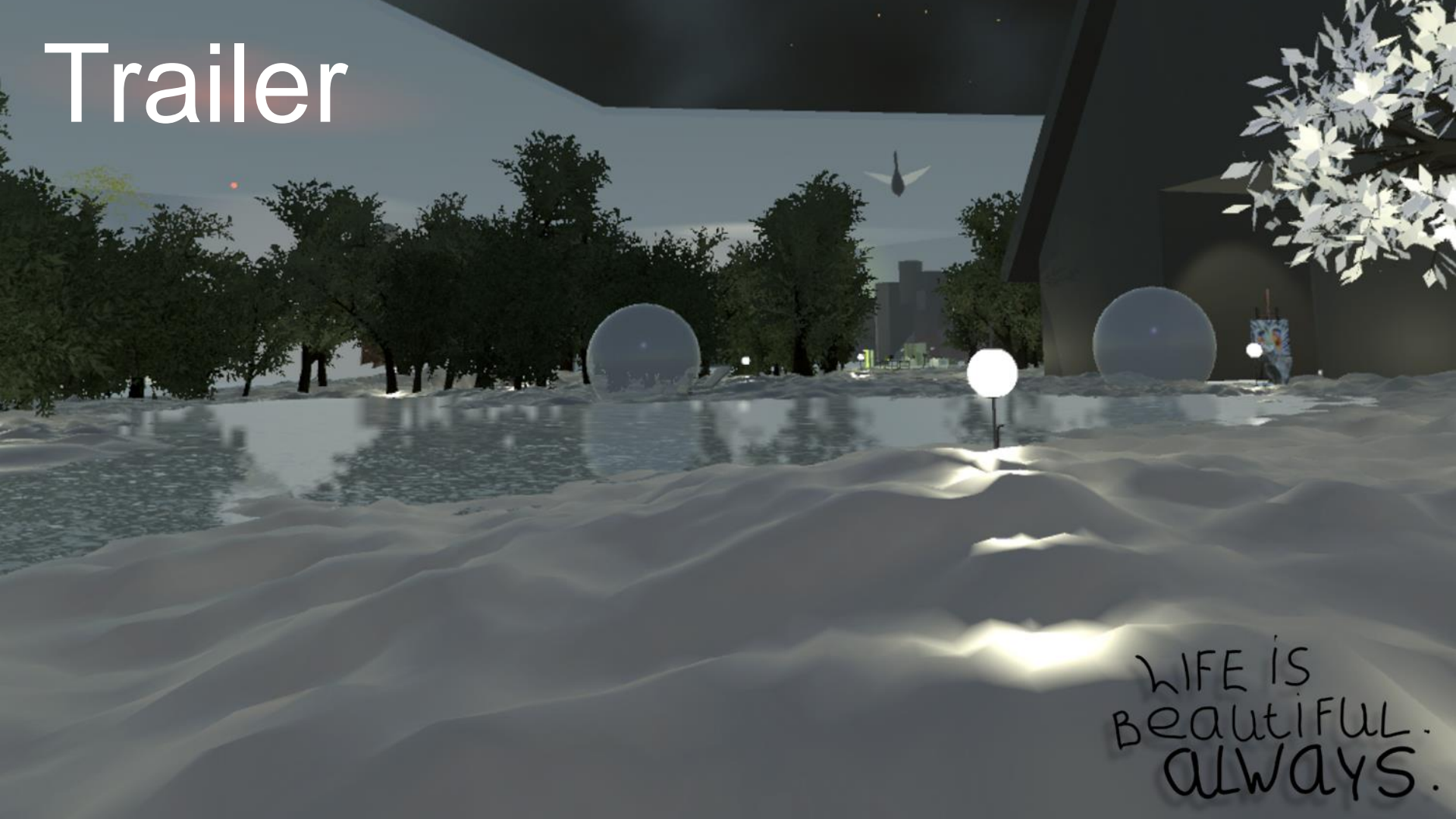
The background is a complex, layered virtual environment. It features a city skyline with various building shapes on the left, a row of trees on the right, and a large, dark, angular structure in the center-right. The ground is a light, reflective surface. Overlaid on this scene are numerous thin, colorful lines in shades of green, blue, and yellow, some forming circular or spiral patterns. The text 'LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL ALWAYS' is written in a large, white, hand-drawn font across the center of the image.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL ALWAYS

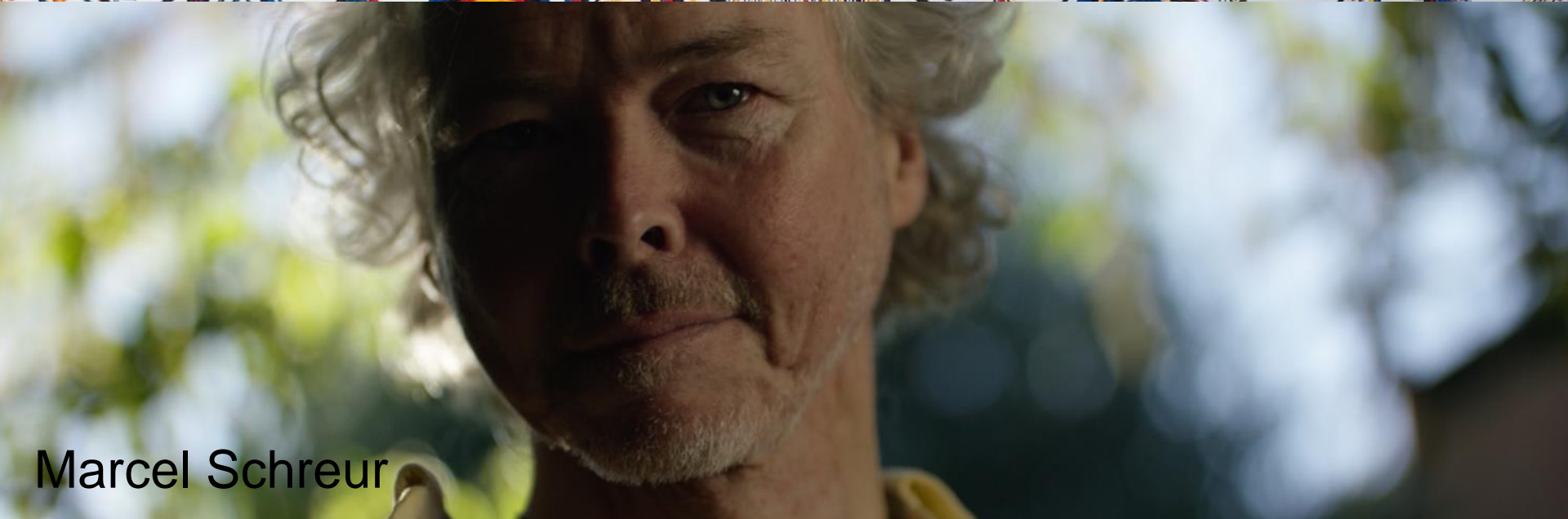
Using Virtual Reality to share the experience of disability

A virtual reality exploration into the life experience of multi-disciplinary artist, Marcel Schreur.
Thirty year oral cancer and seven year vascular dementia survivor.

Trailer

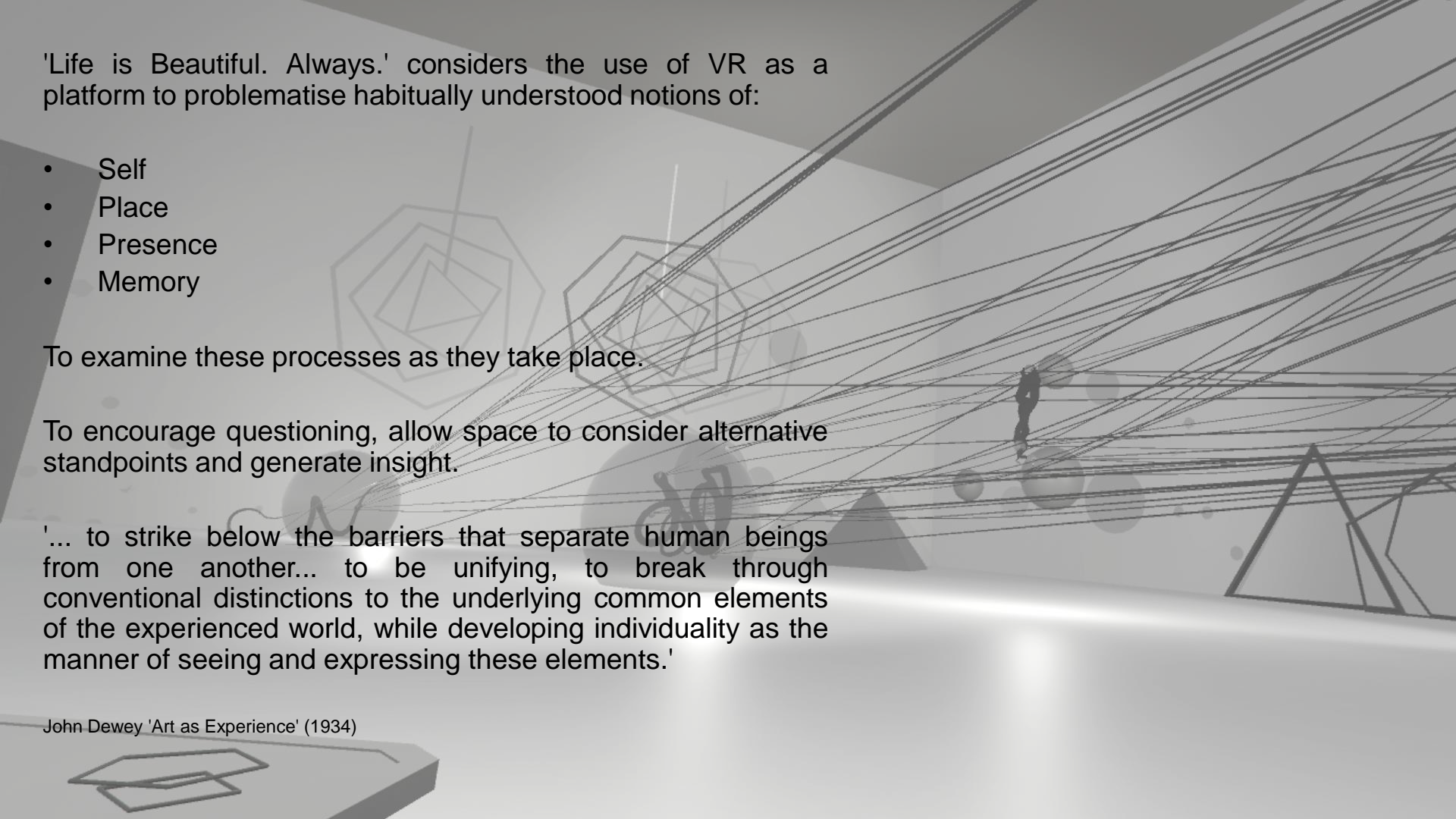


LIFE IS
BEAUTIFUL.
always.



Marcel Schreur



The background is a complex, abstract composition of various geometric elements. It features a network of thin, dark lines that crisscross the frame, some forming a grid-like pattern. There are several concentric polygons, including hexagons and pentagons, some of which are filled with a light gray color. A prominent feature is a large, dark, triangular shape on the right side, which appears to be a stylized representation of a mountain or a large letter 'A'. In the lower-left corner, there is a small, dark, rectangular shape with a white outline, resembling a book or a tablet. The overall color palette is monochromatic, consisting of various shades of gray and black.

'Life is Beautiful. Always.' considers the use of VR as a platform to problematise habitually understood notions of:

- Self
- Place
- Presence
- Memory

To examine these processes as they take place.

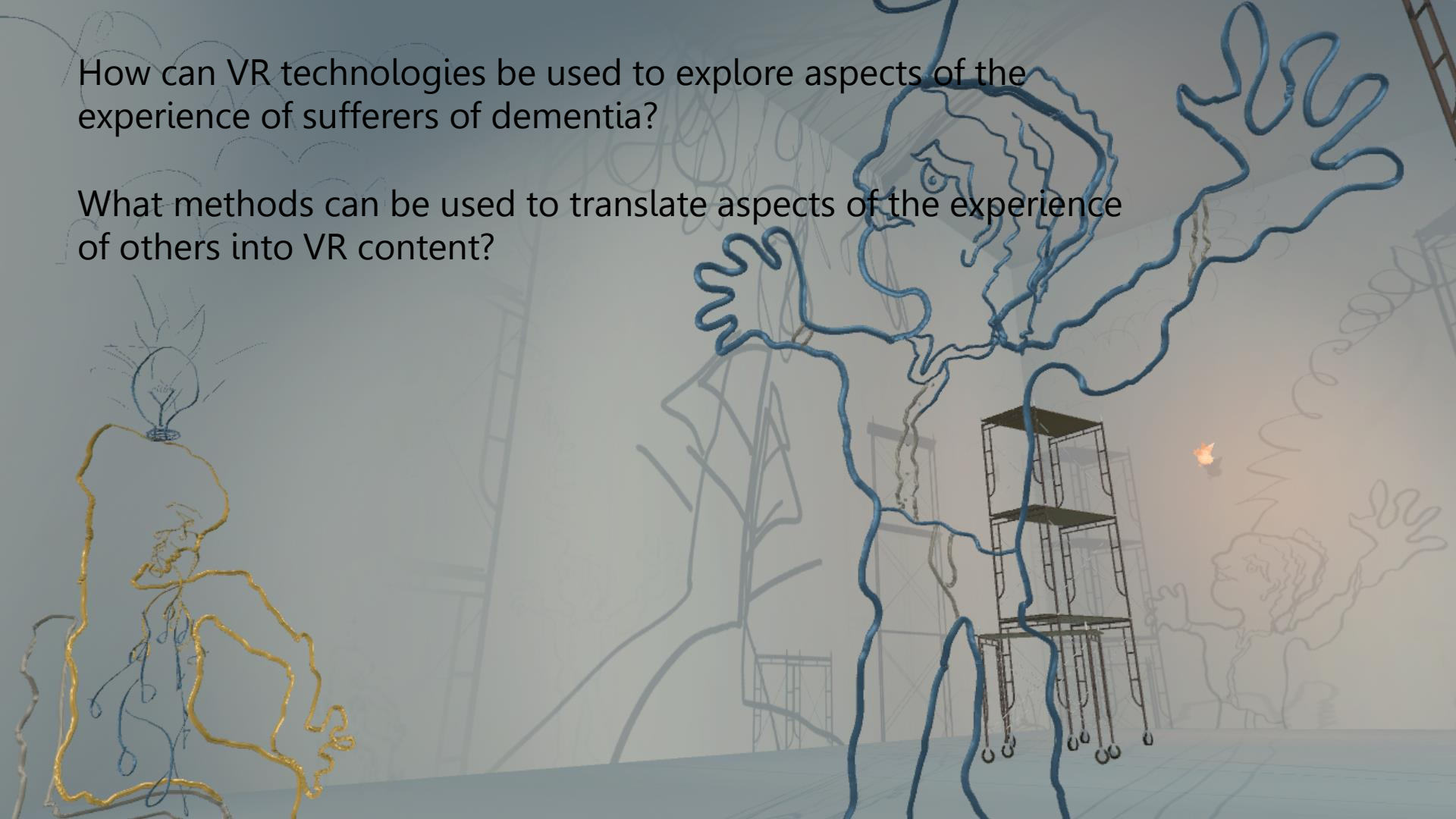
To encourage questioning, allow space to consider alternative standpoints and generate insight.

'... to strike below the barriers that separate human beings from one another... to be unifying, to break through conventional distinctions to the underlying common elements of the experienced world, while developing individuality as the manner of seeing and expressing these elements.'

John Dewey 'Art as Experience' (1934)

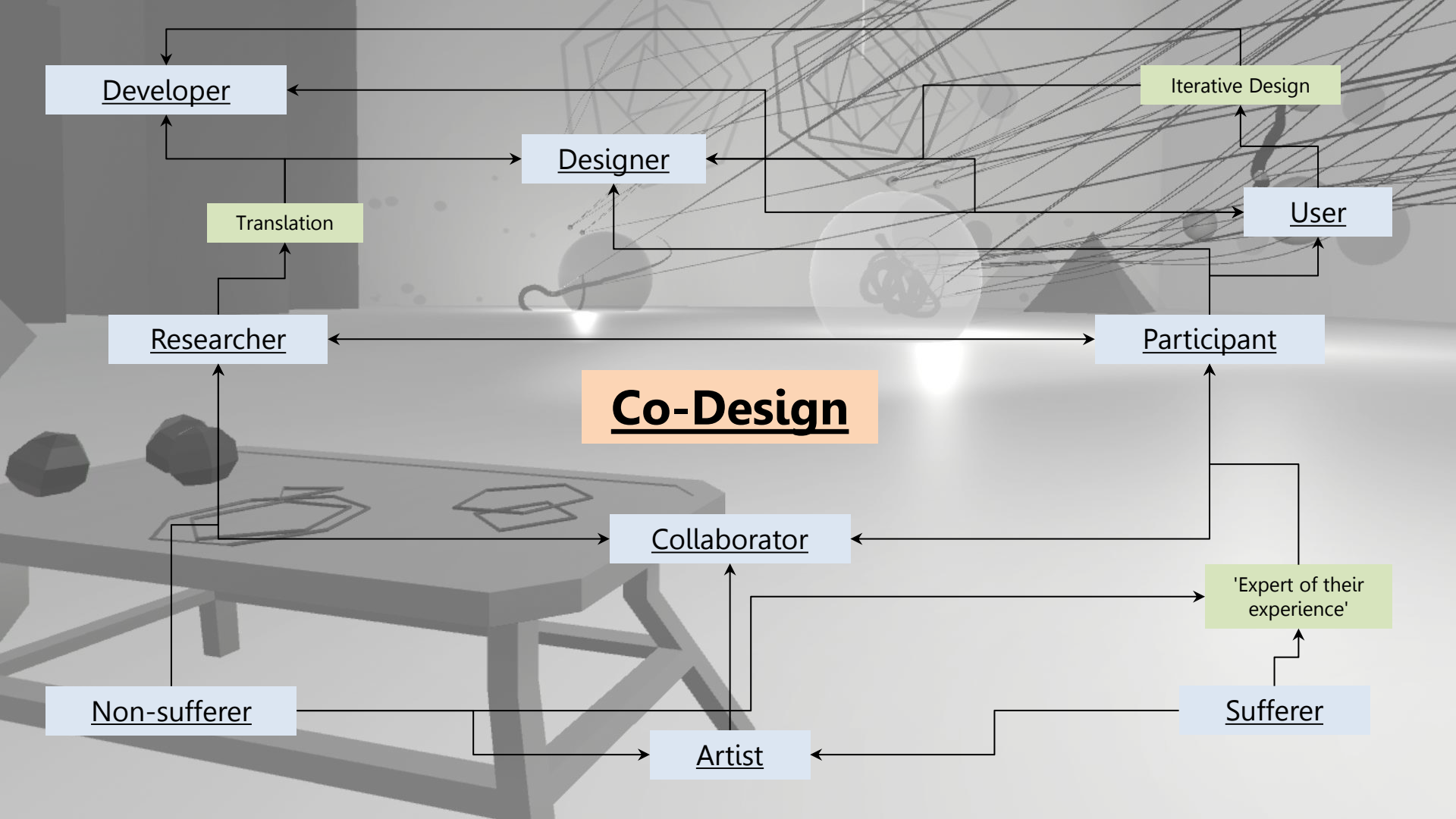
How can VR technologies be used to explore aspects of the experience of sufferers of dementia?

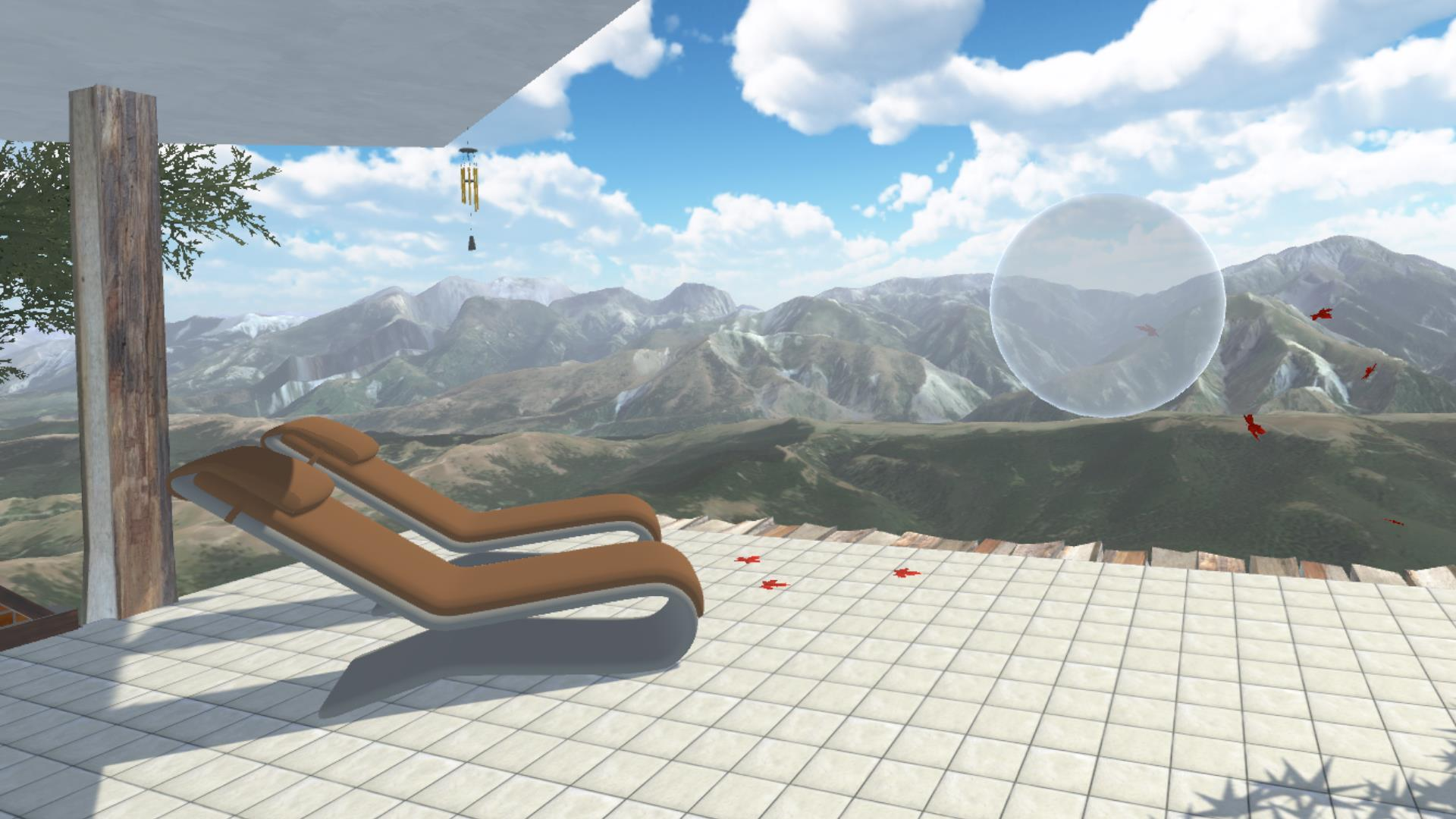
What methods can be used to translate aspects of the experience of others into VR content?

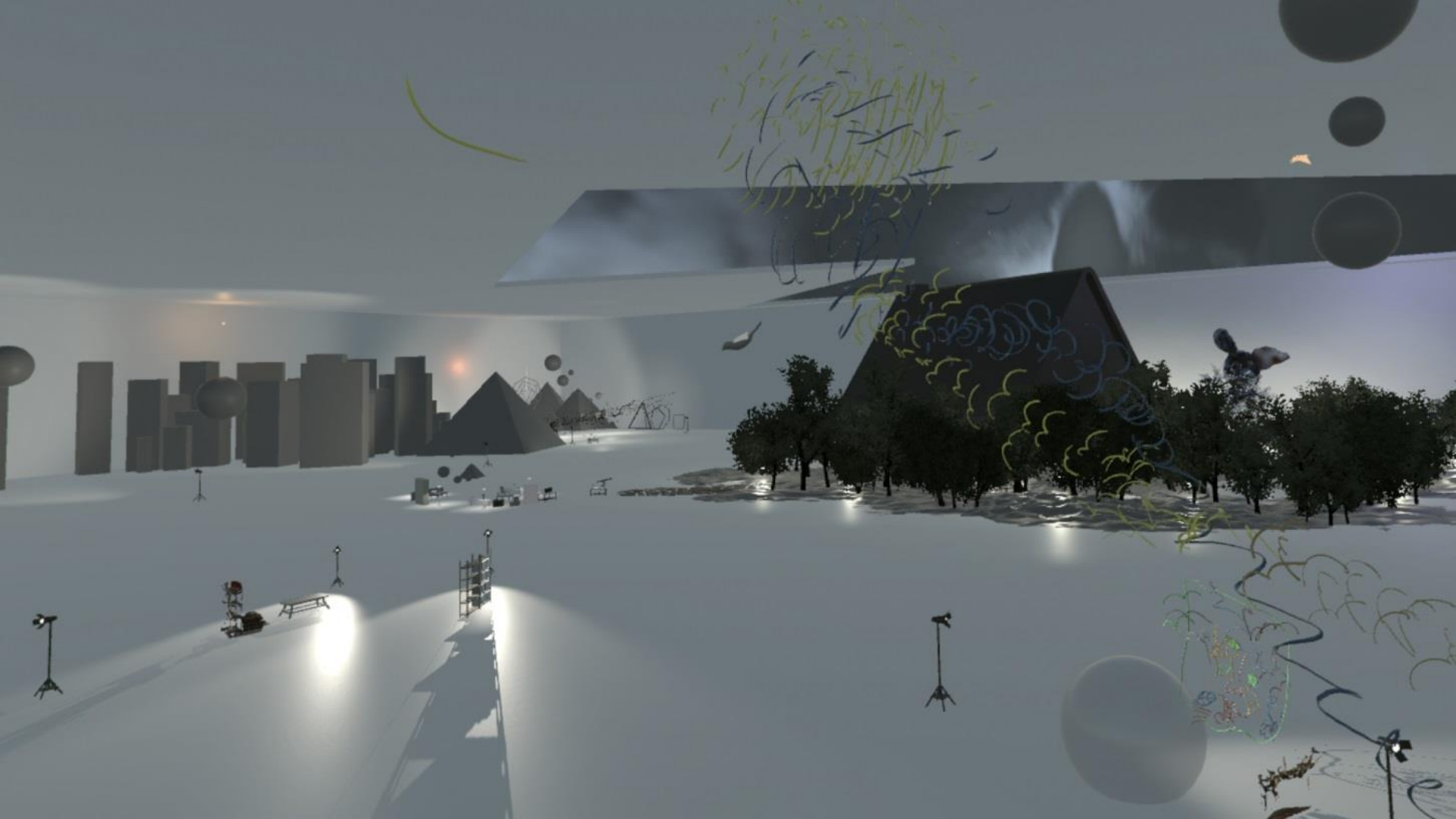


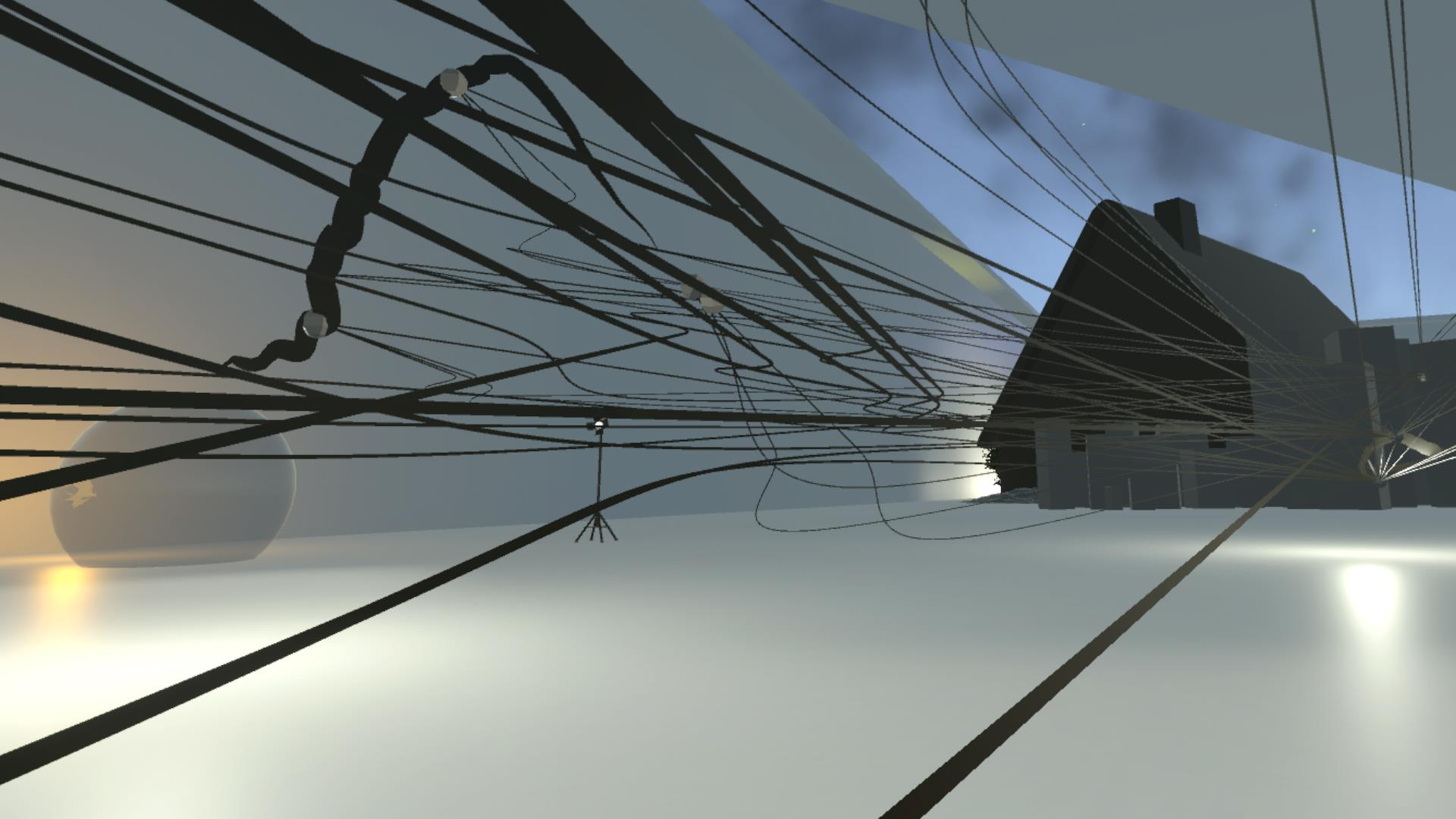
What affordances does the use of VR present to problematise notions of self and presence for participants and how can they be utilised to prompt response and dialogue?

What effects does the setting that VR is presented have on the experience and how can these be designed to complement and contextualise the VR experience and vice versa?





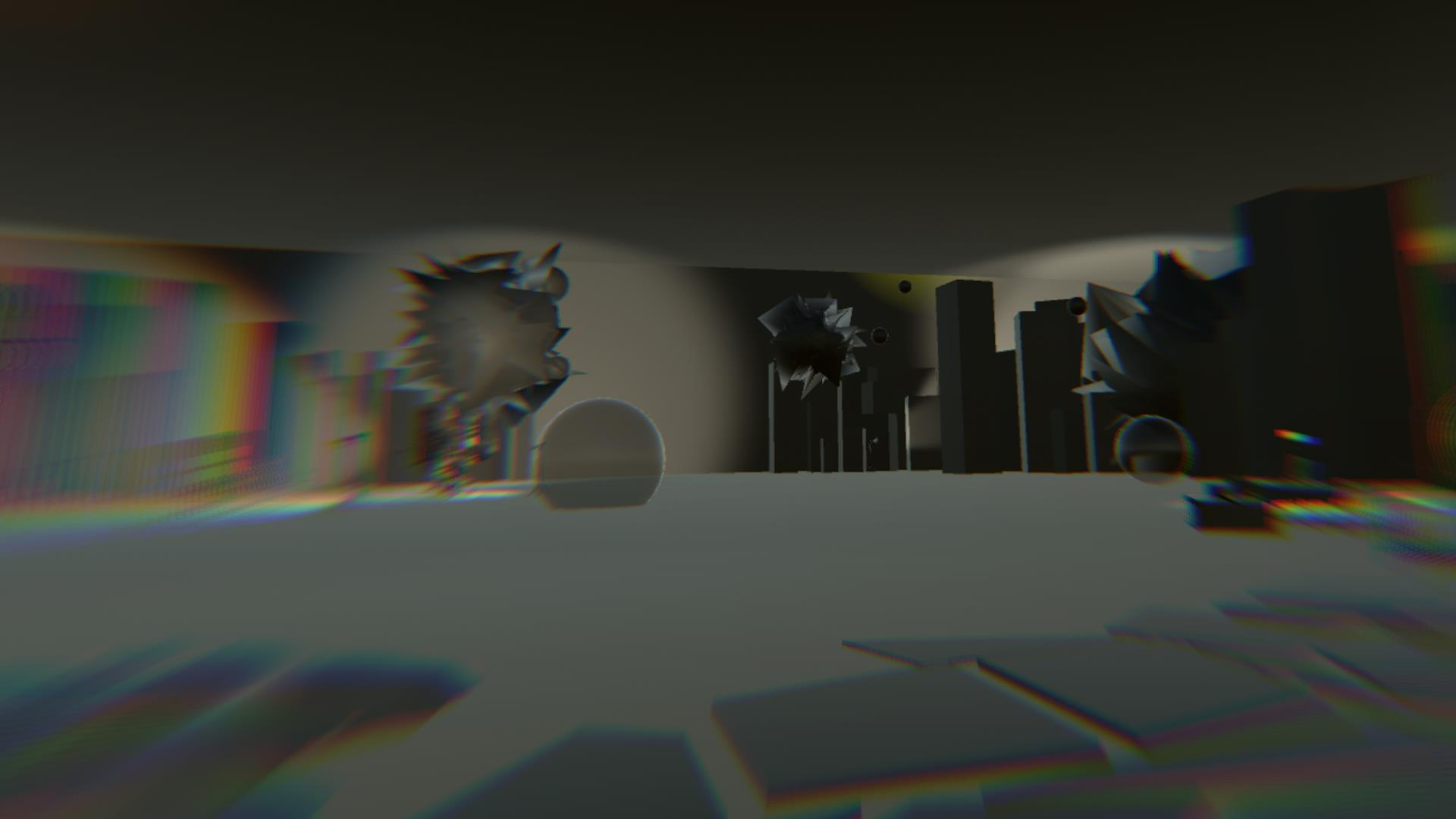


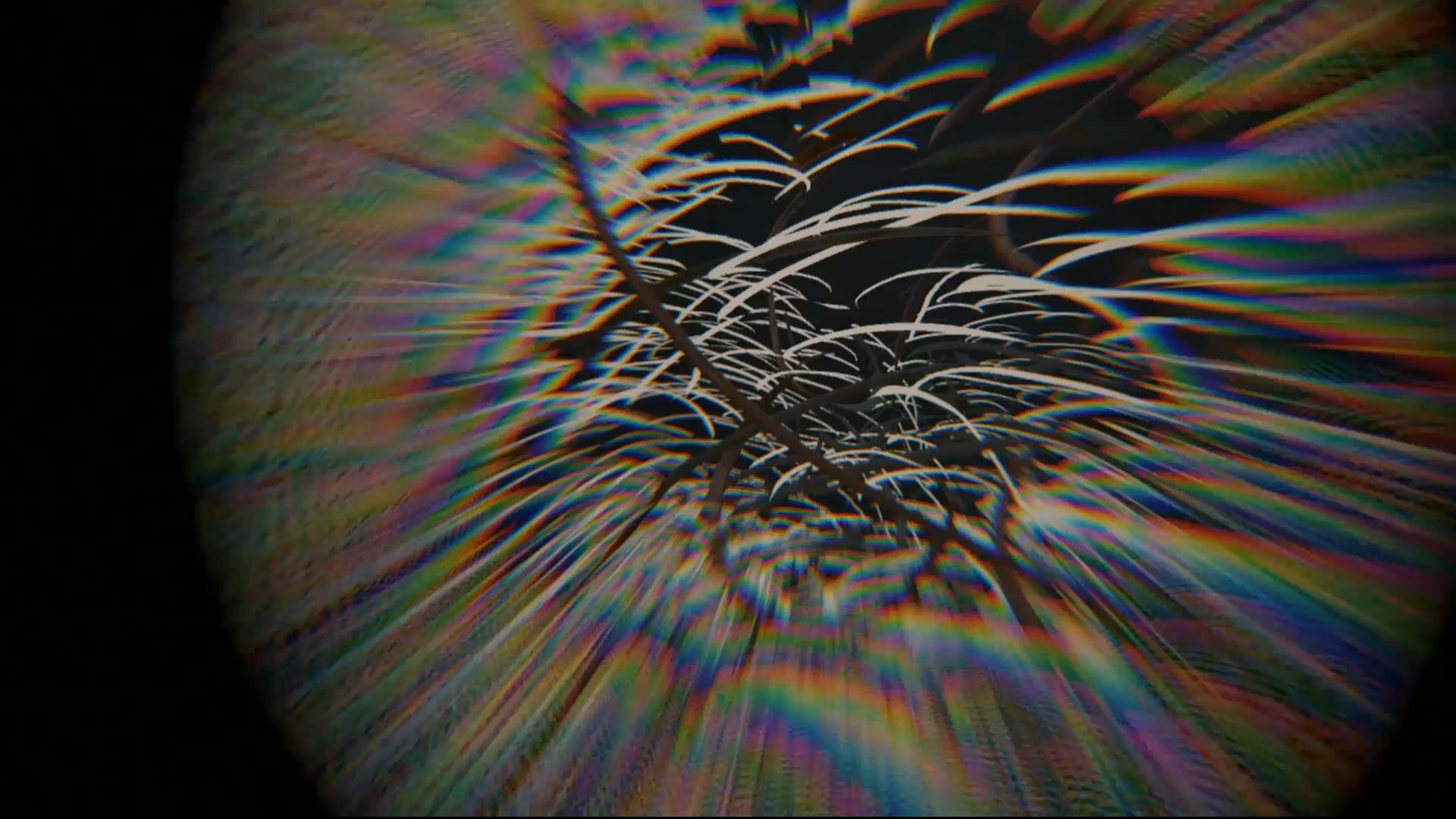


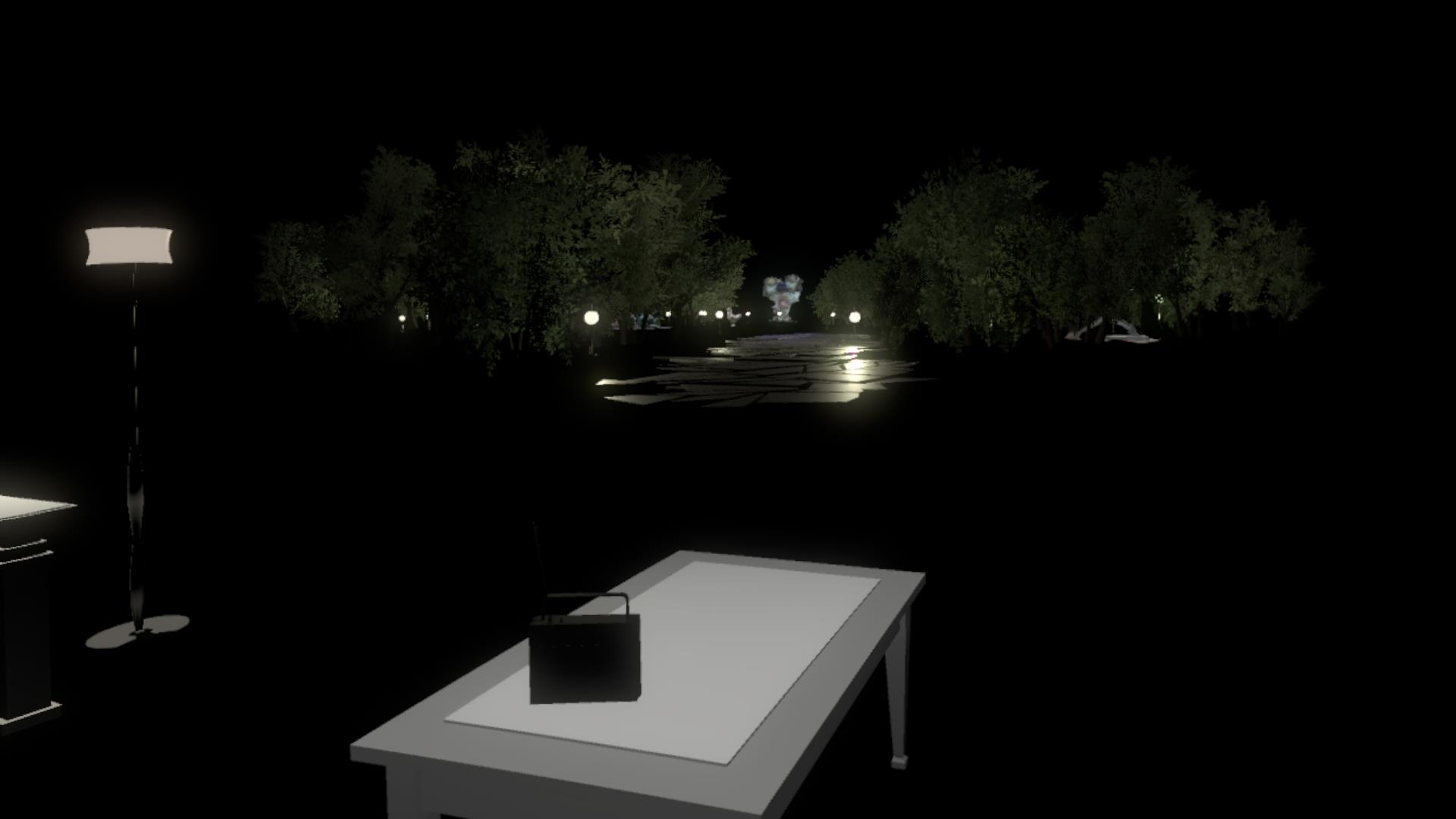














I wish for the participant to realise, at a deeper level, that we are all, at some point in our lives, confronted with disabling circumstances. The VR experience desires to give, where possible, the (temporarily) disabled hope and, by virtue of patience and watchful waiting, direction to live to the best of their disability. Likewise to help bringing about a societal change in the understanding of disability and consequently initiating a shift in the benchmark of treatment and care. I believe that disability is an inherent part of life. It complements life, making it whole and inclusive.

I LOVE
YOU

Although the work touches especially upon my life story and experiences, I believe that it resonates with people that have suffered, treated and cared for other life threatening illnesses, life altering mental health issues and addictions.

'...it is a reminder of memory and loss of memory, and that it is okay because I have people around me that do remember.'

'Every time I start work I start a fresh, and knowing that I have this freedom of not remembering so that I have got this unique way of expressing myself and walking in life. I'm talking a lot so that we remember, and I am okay with that.'

'There is a tension, but a good tension between what the researcher sees and a mind that has this processing speed and has got memory to translate for someone who hasn't got that... I have got more comfortable with that freedom of not remembering, and that is okay as long as we can depend on each other.'

'That freedom is directly influencing the creativity... I've grown in confidence in being able to live with that. So it's security, liberation and feeling safe and doing something beautiful with it. It's about showing other people that it's okay to forget. It's for people who can think to become active with people who cannot or who find it difficult to think or even physically move and see value in that.'





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